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ACTION EA-15

INFO OCT-01 SS-20 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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O R 081001Z JUN 70
 FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6515
 INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
 CINCPAC
 COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 6980

SUBJECT: SYMINGTON TRANSCRIPT

REF: STATE 087939

1. WE HAVE REVISED SUMMARY ALONG LINES PARA 3(C) AND WILL USE ONLY AS BASIS FOR BACKGROUNDING PRESS IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES, WHICH WE KNOW WE WILL BE RECEIVING AS SOON AS TRANSCRIPT STORY IS CARRIED BY WIRE SERVICES. REVISED SUMMARY ALSO BEING TRANSMITTED AS CLASSIFIED LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR TO SELECTED CABINET MEMBERS WHO HAVE EVINced INTEREST IN BEING INFORMED ASAP AFTER RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPT AND WHOM IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE BRIEFED CONSTRUCTIVELY ON THIS MATTER. UNDER COVER THIS LETTER, AMBASSADOR TRANSMITTING TEXT OF HIS OPENING STATEMENT AT HEARINGS. TO THANAT ONLY (REPEAT ONLY) AMBASSADOR ALSO TRANSMITTING TEXT OF SYMINGTON LETTER TO SECRETARY GIVEN TO PRESS BY PINCUS. THIS IS BEING DONE BECAUSE THANAT IS SURE TO BE INTERESTED IN AND REACT TO THE LETTER WHICH IS SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO IN FRONT PAGE STORIES IN BOTH ENGLISH LANGUAGE BANGKOK MONDAY MORNING PAPERS. STORIES, BASED ON REUTERS ACCOUNT OF PINCUS BRIEFING, ARE RELATIVELY UNCONTROVERSIAL AND FOCUS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON US SUPPORT FOR BLACK PANTHERS, CITING TOTAL SUPPORT FIGURE OF MORE THAN \$230 MILLION. (AS ALL WIRE SERVICES THIS MORNING; CARRIED STORY, ENBARGO WAS APPARENTLY NOT OBSERVED.)

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2. WE HAVE SET FORTH BELOW SPECIFIC REBUTTALS OF ALLEGATIONS IN SYMINGTON LETTER AND/OR PINCUS-PAUL BRIEFING WHICH WE SUGGEST DEPT SPOKESMAN SHOULD DRAW ON.

A. CONTRARY TO SYMINGTON LETTER, THE FACT OF US SUPPORT FOR THAI TROOPS IN VIET-NAM NOT REPEAT NOT KEPT SECRET FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. IN EARLY DECEMBER 1967 (REPEAT 1967),N SHORTLY AFTER THE THAI DECIDED TO INCREASE THEIR VOLUNTEER FORCES FROM A REGIMENT TO A LIGHT DIVISION, DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT IN THE CASE OF THREE OF THE FIVE TCC'S--KOREA,N PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND--QUOTE THE US PROVIDES EQUIPMENT AND CERTAIN OTHER FORMS OF DIRECT WITHIN-VIETNAM SUPPORT INCLUDING LOGISTICAL SUPPORT. BASE PAY CONTINUES TO BE PAID BY THE HOME COUNTRY. UNQUOTE. (NOTE: WE CAN ONLY FIND CLASSIFIED FINAL TEXT OF PROPOSED ANNOUNCEMENT IN STATE 80435 OF DECEMBER 6,N 1967; WE ASSUME ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE SHORTLY THEREAFTER). SUBSEQUENTLY, PRESS FREQUENTLY CARRIED ACCOUNTS OF US SUPPORT IN TERMS OF EQUIPMENT, TRAINING, LOGISTICS, ETC. THAI FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT OF DECEMBER 15, 1969, AND GUIDANCE FOR DEPT SPOKESMAN SUBSEQUENTLY DEVELOPED BOTH CONTAIN DETAILS OF US SUPPORT. (SEE BANGKOK 16928, STATE 208466, AND BANGKOK 16992.) THE FOREIGN MINISTRY STATED THAT IT WAS AGREED THAT THE US WOULD ACCEPT ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WHICH THE EXPEDITION OF A THAI MILITARY CONTINGENT TO SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD ENTAIL, INCLUDING PART OF OVERSEAS EXPENDITURES OF THAI FORCES IN VIETNAM. PRESS GUIDANCE STATED THAT US AGREED TO ASSIST IN VARIOUS WAYS INCLUDING: LOGISTIC SUPPORT FOR VN CONTINGENT, PAYMENT TO THAI PERSONNEL OF CERTAIN OVERSEAS ALLOWANCES, AND SOME INCREASE IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO OFFSET REDUCTION IN THAI MILITARY CAPABILITIES RESULTING FROM OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT. MOREOVER, PRESIDENT NIXON IN PUBLIC STATEMENT ON DECEMBER 8, 1969, REFERRING TO PRESS ALLEGATIONS THAT US CONTRIBUTION TO THAI VOLUNTEER FORCES IN VIETNAM HAD AMOUNTED TO ONE BILLION DOLLARS, STATED QUOTE: THE AMOUNT IS, OF COURSE, LESS THAN THAT. UNQUOTE, THUS PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT COSTS OF VOLUNTEER FORCE WERE PARTIALLY BORNE BY US.

B. WITH OFFICIAL RTG ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF US CONTRIBUTION ON THE RECORD LONG SINCE, STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED BY SYMINGTON AND PINCUS TO PRIMIN THANOM (AN INCORRECT QUOTE TO BEGIN WITH; SEE BANGKOK 6647) IS OBVIOUS DISTORTION OF MEANING OF PRIMIN'S REMARKS. HE HAD REFERRED ONLY TO THE PART OF COSTS FOR THAI VOLUNTEER FORCES WHICH IS BORNE

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BY RTG (SEE SUPPORT COST TABLE AT PP. 842-3 IN TRANSCRIPT) AND WHICH IN CASE OF VOLUNTEERS FOR CAMBODIAN FORCES WOULD OF COURSE NOT BE UNDERWRITTEN BY THAILAND, (ALTHOUGH PRIMIN OFFERED TRAINING; AND OTHER ASSISTANCE FOR THEM.)

C. PINCUS RAISED SEVERAL POINTS WHICH IMPLY THAT THE THAIS HAVE DONE LITTLE FOR US IN RETURN FOR ALL THE ASSISTANCE WE HAVE GIVEN THEM. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE STRESSED THE \$2 BILLION TOTAL COST OF US OPERATIONS IN THAILAND. THIS, OF COURSE, REPRESENTS SUM TOTAL OF OUR ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY, TO THAILAND, AS WELL AS LARGE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM CARRIED OUT IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF US MILITARY OPERATIONS. LUMPING ECONOMIC AID INTO THIS TOTAL IS IRRELEVANT TO AN EXAMINATION OF US COMMITMENTS TO THAILAND. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, OF COURSE, HAS BEEN GRANTED TO MANY COUNTRIES IN ALL CONTINENTS; SINCE INCEPTION OF MARSHALL PLAN, ASSISTANCE TO DISADVANTAGED NATIONS HAS BEEN REGARDED AS A POLICY OF ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST.

D. SHOULD THAI "INGRATITUDE" BECOME AN ISSUE WITH THE PRESS, A SUBJECT ON WHICH THAI IN GENERAL AND FONMIN THANAT IN PARTICULAR ARE VERY SENSITIVE, SUGGEST THE DEPARTMENT STRONGLY EMPHASIZE THE BENEFITS WE GAIN FROM THE USE OF THAI BASES, BOTH IN LIVES AND IN COST-EFFECTIVENESS. FROM A MONETARY POINT OF VIEW, FOR EXAMPLE, USE OF U-TAPAO RTAFB HAS SAVED US OVER \$400,000 PER DAY, (THIS FIGURE VERIFIED TODAY BY 3RD AIR DIV GUAM) AS COMPARED WITH THE COST OF CONDUCTING B-52 STRIKES OF SAME EFFECTIVENESS FROM GUAM. THIS COMPUTATION INCLUDES SAVINGS IN FUEL, MAINTENANCE, TANKER SUPPORT, AND LARGER BOMB LOADS. THERE ARE SIMILAR SAVINGS IN RUNNING TACTICAL AIR STRIKES IN LAOS FROM THAILAND RATHER THAN FROM BASES IN SOUTH VIET NAM OR FROM CARRIERS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. MORE IMPORTANT, NO PRICE CAN BE PUT ON THE NUMBER OF LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN SAVED BY THE USE OF THAI BASES. THESE ARE SECURE FROM ATTACK, THEIR PROXIMITY TO OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM AND LAOS MEANS SHORTER DISTANCES FOR DAMAGED AIRCRAFT TO RETURN AND RESCUE OPERATIONS CAN BE CONDUCTED WITH FAR GREATER EFFECTIVENESS.

E. RE CHARGES OF ETO GOUGING, POINT CAN BE MADE THAT MILITARY CARGO, HIGH EXPLOSIVES, ETC. COMMAND EXTRA TRANSPORTATION RATES ALSO IN THE US BECAUSE OF SPECIAL HANDLING, HIGHER INSURANCE, ETC.

F. PAUL'S ATTRIBUTION OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT OF SEAFO COMMITMENT ON 103100200200195

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EASILY DEMOLISHED ON GROUNDS THAT IT REFERS TO NOTHING; MORE THAN A
PERFECTLY CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN PARAS 1 AND 2 IN
ARTICLE 4 OF TREATY AND THEREFORE HAS BEEN WELL KNOWN TO
US SENATE AND PUBLIC SINCE 1954.

3. RE SYMINGTON QUESTIONS ABOUT THAI FORCE CONTRIBUTION
FOR CAMBODIA, PRESUME SPOKESMAN WILL REFRAIN FROM
COMMENTING, AS WE WILL PLAN TO HERE, ON GROUNDS THAT
LETTER WILL BE ANSWERED IN DUE COURSE BY SECRETARY AND
WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE ANTICIPATE HIS REPLY. WE WILL
FORWARD OUR THOUGHTS ON CAMBODIA QUESTIONS SHORTLY AND IN
MEANTIME WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE HOW DEPARTMENT HANDLING;
QUESTIONS. GP-3.
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